



REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

GRANT PERIOD: 2018–2021

VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA, DAKOTAS REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP GRANT PROJECT

LEAD AGENCY: Volunteers of America, Dakotas

TARGET SERVICE AREA: South Dakota

LOCATION: Sioux Falls, South Dakota

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES REGION: 8

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT SERVED: South Dakota at Large

BRIEF PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: Volunteers of America, Dakotas (VOAD) New Start Residential program and its primary partner, the South Dakota Department of Social Services, Division of Child Protection are addressing the need for formal coordination mechanisms among family-serving agencies to respond to the rising rate of children in out-of-home placements due to parental substance misuse. South Dakota's limited resources and lack of capacity for addressing these needs compound the problem of parental substance abuse and its effect on child well-being. VOAD's New Start program is one of only two residential treatment facilities in the state in which mothers live with their children during recovery. The project is located in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and will serve families from across the entire state.

South Dakota is in the midst of a methamphetamine epidemic, while at the same time experiencing a growing opioid problem. These circumstances have led to a significant increase in the number of child abuse and neglect cases. In a point in time review (October 2020), the Division of Child Protection placed 283 children in state custody due to methamphetamine use in the Sioux Falls area. More than half (57.6%) of the children in care involve methamphetamine use. The New Start program provides treatment and other services and supports to families experiencing these challenges.

TARGET POPULATION: The New Start program serves pregnant, parenting, and postpartum women whose children have been removed or are at risk of being removed from their custody due to substance use. Children, ages 0–8 years, are able to reside with their mothers at the New Start program.

NUMBERS SERVED: The program served 148 mothers and 112 children between May 2019 and September 2020. The program will serve an additional 127 mothers and 96 children through 2021.

MAJOR PROGRAM GOALS

- GOAL 1:** Improve and formalize coordination among VOAD, South Dakota Department of Social Services, Division of Child Protection, Second Judicial Circuit Court Services, the Department of Corrections, and other key stakeholders.
- GOAL 2:** Enhance the New Start program to include services that address risk for out-of-home placement due to mother's substance use.
- GOAL 3:** Conduct a comprehensive evaluation through a contract with independent evaluator NPC Research.

KEY PROGRAM SERVICES

- A Woman's Way Through the Twelve Steps
- Aftercare/Continuing Care/Recovery Community Support Services (follow-up services to mothers, children, and families post-discharge)
- Criminal and Addictive Thinking
- Hazelden's Personal Recovery Plan
- Hazelden's Relapse Prevention Program
- Incredible Years (Small Group Dinosaur)
- Integrated Dual Disorder Treatment Recovery Life Skills Program
- Matrix Model
- Matrix Model Culturally Adapted for American Indians/Alaska Natives
- Medical Assessment
- Mental Health Counseling
- Motivational Interviewing
- Nurturing Parenting Program (including Families in Substance Abuse Treatment & Recovery and Parents and their Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers)
- Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy
- Trauma Recovery and Empowerment Model
- White Bison—Wellbriety

PARTNER AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

- Adult Criminal Drug Court
- Center for Disabilities/Birth to Three
- Center for the Prevention of Child Maltreatment
- Child's Voice
- Evaluator/Data Collection and Analysis—NPC Research
- Glory House
- Second Judicial Circuit Court ServicesSioux Falls CASA
- Sioux Falls Health Department, Falls Community Health
- South Dakota Department of Social Services, Division of Behavioral Health
- South Dakota Department of Social Services, Division of Child Protection
- State Department of Corrections (including state probation and prisons)

EVALUATION DESIGN

VOAD's local evaluation has three components: an impact study, a process study, and a collaboration study. The grantee is also participating in the Regional Partnership Grant (RPG) cross-site evaluation studies of family and child outcomes, program implementation, and collaboration among RPG grantees and partners.

IMPACT STUDY DESIGN

VOAD is examining the impact of its RPG services using a quasi-experimental design. Members of the program group are mothers admitted to VOAD's New Start program for residential substance use treatment services who have a child(ren) in or at risk of out-of-home placement due to substance use. Program group mothers can reside at New Start with one or more children ages 0–8. Mothers and residing children receive New Start's usual residential substance use treatment services plus enhancements including the Nurturing Parenting Program, the Integrated Dual Disorders Treatment Recovery Life Skills Program, Incredible Years–Small Group Dinosaur, mental health treatment and play therapy for the children, cultural activities, and

aftercare services. Residential services last about 4 months, and aftercare services are offered for up to 6 months following discharge from residential care. In addition, family members not residing at New Start (other children and fathers) are offered screening, assessment, and case management services via telehealth technology. Members of the comparison group receive residential substance use treatment services at a different, nearby facility. The comparison group facility provides similar residential and aftercare services for adults only (children do not reside at the comparison facility) and does not offer parenting or child enhancements. The impact study includes approximately 100 mothers in the program group and 100 mothers in the comparison group. The grantee examines impacts in the following domains: permanency, safety, child well-being, adult well-being, family functioning, and recovery.

Data sources include administrative data and information collected by data collectors using standardized instruments. Grantee staff conduct data collection with standardized instruments for both the program and comparison groups. Data are collected three times for each family in the treatment group and comparison group: (1) when families begin residential services (baseline), (2) when families exit residential services, and (3) 3 months following discharge from residential treatment.

PROCESS STUDY DESIGN

In the process study, the grantee is examining the extent to which implementation occurred according to the original plan, reasons for deviations from plans, the number and characteristics of participants, type and dosage of services participants received, implementation barriers encountered and solutions to the barriers that were developed, and implementation lessons learned. Data sources include direct observation, document review, focus groups with participants, interviews with program partners and service providers, and monthly conference calls between the evaluator and grantee project team.

PARTNERSHIP STUDY DESIGN

In the partnership study, the grantee is examining the quality and quantity of collaborative relationships across agencies. The study will measure the number of memoranda of understandings (MOUs) and data-sharing agreements established, degree of agreement between partners on program goals and outcomes, and number and perceived utility of meetings among partners. Data sources include observations of partnership meetings, interviews with partners, and document reviews.

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

New Start has established and/or updated program policies and procedures, updated and/or developed forms, and trained staff to embed the RPG project into New Start's ongoing practices. Project partners meet at least quarterly to review partner agreements and develop a seamless system for collaborative care, including the development of accountability mechanisms, data collection and evaluation agreements, and processes for communication and coordination.

The key organizations whose support is required in order to sustain the RPG project are the Division of Child Protection, Department of Corrections, Second Judicial Circuit Court Services, and Division of Behavioral Health. VOAD has current, longstanding relationships with these entities, and throughout the duration of the grant project, the managing director of Behavioral Health and the RPG project director are responsible for managing these relationships. This includes ensuring ongoing communication and sharing of project outcomes and results to

demonstrate the positive impact of the program and encourage sustained involvement of these partners after the project period has ended.

VOAD's RPG project and all its partners meet quarterly to review program outcomes and identify activities and strategies that have led to improved outcomes and that partners should sustain after the project period has ended, as well as discuss potential strategies for sustainability. The project's robust partnerships allow for several opportunities to diversify funding sources, an important factor in sustainability. New Start has sustained core services through state contracts and Medicaid. The agency continually pursues partnerships with additional payer sources to sustain services. Some services provided through this project—including a portion of those delivered by the addictions counselor, family coaches, mental health and Look Up and Hope coordinator, and child psychologist—are offered as a match from VOAD; thus, these services will be able to be sustained beyond the period of federal funding.

VOAD has an internal development department and an active Board of Directors, which includes a specific fundraising committee. The Board of Directors is committed to sustaining and expanding behavioral health programs such as New Start, and has identified behavioral health as one of the agency's top growth priorities. VOAD also has an internal grant team dedicated to continually researching and preparing applications for local, state, and federal funding to sustain programming.

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